



NOAA

NATIONAL OCEANIC AND
ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION
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Stufft family honored for 100 years of support to National Weather Service

A well-known family from rural Nebraska is recognized by the National Weather Service for a century of dedication to the volunteer weather observation program.

Officials of NOAA's North Platte forecast office will honor five generations of the Stufft family in a June 1 ceremony marking the family's 100 years of participation in the program.

Since June 1, 1911, five generations of the George Stufft Family have provided an unbroken stream of precipitation and temperature data for the observation site nine miles east-northeast of Elsmere and about 38 miles southwest of Ainsworth. The family has provided more than 36,500 daily reports to the North Platte Weather Service staff.

Brian Hirsch, meteorologist in charge of the North Platte office will present the Family Heritage Award to the Stufft Family at a ceremony to begin at 2 p.m. CDT, Aug. 13 at the Assembly of God church in Ainsworth

"The millions of bits of weather data collected by volunteer observers around the country have enabled weather scientists and researchers to develop information utilized in analysis of United States weather and climate records vital to daily, weekly and decadal forecasting," said Lynn Maximuk, director of National Weather Service's central region. "Before we can understand how the world's climate functions, we have to know how the climate functions in our own country. The availability of information collected for 100 years and more is a prime example of the determination and spirit Americans have demonstrated since the country was founded by a group of forefathers that included weather observers."

George "Curt" Stufft established the Elsmere site (then called Koshopah 7NE) at the Stufft Ranch and provided daily precipitation and temperature data to the then U.S. Weather Bureau for 8 years. His son Foster took over observing duties for a short time beginning in 1919. Just a few days after their wedding, Foster's new wife Ruby took over the helm on April 26, 1920. One of the most-honored cooperative observers in the program, Ruby served as the primary observer until she died in 1975, only a few days before she would have completed 75 years of service.

Ruby's son Lester started as his mother's back-up on Nov. 20, 1958 and remains as the primary observer today. Lester's son Curt became his back up is the current back-up and is waiting in the wings to take over responsibility for the site. Lester Stufft said the family hopes to continue its weather observing tradition for another 100 years.

As primary observers, Ruby and Lester Stufft helped set the standard for program participants and earned much recognition from NOAA. The mother and son are the only members of the same family to receive NOAA's two most prestigious awards presented to cooperative observers.

Ruby received the John Campanius Holm Award in 1966 and received the Thomas Jefferson Award in 1976. Lester received the Holm Award in 1999 and the Jefferson Award in 2008. In addition, in October 1992, NOAA officials named the 70-year length of service award the Ruby Stufft Award.

"Volunteers like the Stufft Family, are crucial to National Weather Service operations" Maximuk said. "Of more than 11,000 volunteer observers around the country contributing to the daily collection of weather data only a dedicated few have been in operation for 100 years or more. That is a small amount of time compared to the planet's existence, but covers a significant portion of modern North American history.

The National Weather Service's cooperative weather observer program is a unique partnership between the agency and citizen volunteers in every U.S. state and territory. The cooperative observer program has given scientists and researchers continuous weather data since the program's inception in 1890. Today volunteer observers provide daily reports on temperature, precipitation and other weather factors such as snow depth, river levels and soil moisture

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